

Custom in some of the negroes who inhabit the delta of the Niger ^{we} read ^{deltriger that: " A custom which formerly was} Poetised by the Ibani, and is still prevalent among all the interior tribes, consists in prolonging the life of a king or ancestral representative by the daily, or possibly weekly, sacrifice of a chicken and egg. Every morning, as soon as the patriarch has risen from his bed, the sacrificial articles are procured either by his mother, head wife, or eldest daughter, and given to the priest, who receives them on the open space in front of the house. When this has been reported to the patriarch, he comes outside and, sitting down, joins in the ceremony. Taking the chicken in his hand, the priest first of all touches the patriarch's face with it, and afterwards passes it over the whole of his body. He then cuts its throat and allows the blood to drop on the ground. Mixing the blood and the earth into a paste, he rubs it on the old man's forehead and breast, and this is not to be washed off under any circumstances until the evening. The chicken and the egg, also a piece of white cloth, are now tied on to a stick, which, if a stream is in the near vicinity, is planted in the ground at the water-side. During the carriage of these articles to the place in question, all the wives and many members of the household accompany the priest, invoking the deity as they go to prolong their father's life. This is done in the firm conviction that through the sacrifice of each chicken his life will be accordingly prolonged.⁵¹ The ceremony thus described is, like so many other rites, a combination of magic and religion; for whereas the prayers to the god are religious, the passing of the victim over the king's body and the smearing of him with its blood are magical, being plainly intended to convey to him directly, without the mediation of any deity, the life of the fowl. In the following instances the Customs for prolonging the king's life seem to be purely magical. Among ^{b^the}Cd the ~Zuius> at one of the annual feasts of first-fruits, a bull is killed by a particular regiment. In slaughtering the Zuius^and Caffres to use spears or sticks, but must break its neck or choke it with their prolong the bare h_an{ }s. « j_t is then burned, and the strength

of the bull is
kin⁰ "Slife"

" supposed to enter into the king, thereby prolonging
his life."² Again,

in an early Portuguese historian we read of a Caffre
king of East
Africa that "it is related of this Monomotapa that he
has a house
where he commands bodies of men who have died at
the hands of
the law to be hung up, and where thus hanging all
the humidity

¹ Major A. G. Leonard, *The Lower* (London, 1857), p.

26. The reason
Niger and its Tribes (London, 1906), for not stabbing the
animal is perhaps
p. 457- a wish not to lose any of the
blood,

but to convey its life intact to the
² D. Leslie, *Among the Zulus and* king. The same
reason would ex-

*AHiatongas** (Edinburgh, 1875), P- 9^{1*} plain the same rule
which the Baganda
This sacrifice may be the one described observed in killing a
human victim for
by J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal* the same purpose
(see below, p. 224).